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GRANT ASSISTS FIELD WORKERS DISPLACED BY E. COLI FALLOUT

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) today announced it has awarded a \$50,000 grant to The Center for Employment Training (CET) to assist agricultural workers who have been displaced in Monterey County due to the E. coli in spinach outbreak.

"The economic consequences of the E. coli outbreak have had immediate and dramatic effects in Monterey County," said CSD Director Lloyd T. Throne. "The industry is estimated to be losing more than \$1 million a day, but the cost to agricultural workers and their families is also very high. They need help with rent, food, medical costs and child care, along with vocational training and job assistance."

CET, a nonprofit educational and employment training agency headquartered in San Jose, serves low-income, disadvantaged individuals and families, with about 50 percent of its participants limited or non-English speakers. CET is one of a network of community-based providers who are contracted with CSD to provide direct services to low-income Californians.

CET estimates that plant closures and the E. coli outbreak have impacted more than 2,000 workers in Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz counties. At least 500 agricultural workers and vegetable processors have lost their jobs or have experienced a reduction in work hours, and additional workers will soon face layoffs or a decrease in hours if the demand for spinach products does not regain public confidence.

"The economic impact on these agricultural workers is broad. Farmers, truck drivers and consumers are all impacted," said CET Executive Director Hermelinda Sapien. "This grant will assist us in leveraging other funds to assist workers and their families."

The \$50,000 grant is funded by federal Community Services Block Grant discretionary funds. CET and many of CSD's other providers are skilled at leveraging funds. They find matching funds from the private sector or tap their community network to find services in kind, greatly increasing the value of the original grant. Leveraging ups the number of individuals and families who can be helped.

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